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MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Achievement Matters Most

A Publication from the Maryland State Department of Education

Maryland Classroom

Adequate Yearly Progress: A Primer

The cornerstone of Maryland's new accountability system is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which replaces the School Performance Index (SPI) as the measure by which MSDE tracks academic progress and makes decisions about school and school system improvement. (For background on federal AYP guidelines, see *Maryland Classroom*, Vol. 8, No. 3/ June 2003.)

Reading and Math Performance

All schools must make AYP in reading and math performance. In addition to student performance in the aggregate, AYP must be made among students of all five major racial/ethnic groups (African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, White) and among students receiving special services (limited English proficient, free and reduced-price meals, special education). Reading and math performance are measured by the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) or Independence Mastery Assessment Program (IMAP), for which the State Board of Education set cut scores in late July (see "Setting Standards for the MSA, HSA, and IMAP/Alt-MSA," page 3).

Which Students Are Tested?

All students are tested under Maryland's new accountability system. All students' scores are reported at the school, school system, and state levels. And the scores of all students who meet academic-year requirements count toward AYP.[1]

Students with Disabilities

Students with severe cognitive disabilities who are not able to take the MSA, even with accommodations, take the Independence Mastery Assessment Program (IMAP), revised this year to include greater emphasis on reading and math ability and renamed IMAP/Alt-MSA. (Next year, IMAP/Alt-MSA will be further refined and drop the term "IMAP" altogether.) IMAP/Alt-MSA standards were set at the same time MSA standards were set. Accommodations for all state tests must be the same as those provided during classroom instruction and prescribed in students' Individualized Education Programs. The IMAP/Alt-MSA will be scored and, if academic-year requirements are met, the results will be included in AYP calculations.

Students With Limited or No English Proficiency

As required by No Child Left Behind, students with limited or no English proficiency must participate in state tests with appropriate accommodations. Test proctors should end the testing session early if a student with no English proficiency is unable to perform comfortably or productively. The student's test will be scored and, if academic-year requirements are met, the results will be included in AYP calculations.

[1]All students enrolled for a full academic year (from September 30 through testing or, for geometry, through the duration of the course) count for school, system, and state AYP. Students moving among schools in the same system count for system and state AYP. Students moving among systems count for state AYP. Students moving among states do not count for AYP.

Which Grades and Subjects Are Tested?

2003–04

Students in grades 3–8 and grade 10 take the MSA in reading. Students in grades 3–8 and those taking a high-school-level geometry course take the MSA in math. Reading and math scores for fourth-, sixth-, and seventh-graders will be reported for the 2003–04 school year but will not be included in AYP calculations until 2004–05.

2005–06

Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 have science added to their tested subjects. The MSA in science is administered as a field test. Science results are not factored into AYP.

2007–08

Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 take the MSA in science as an operational test. The biology HSA fulfills No Child Left Behind's high-school science test requirement. Science results are not factored into AYP.

Setting AYP Baselines

Figure 1

Use the higher of the two values below.

- Rank all schools by percent of students at or above *proficient*.
- Count up this ranking until reaching 20% of state enrollment.
- Record the percent of students at or above *proficient* in that school.

OR

Percent of students at or above *proficient* in the state's lowest achieving subgroup:

- African American
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hispanic
- White
- free and reduced-price meals (FARM)
- limited English proficient (LEP)
- special education

Box #1 Explained: Rank all schools from the one with the lowest percentage of students at or above *proficient* to the one with the highest percentage of students at or above *proficient*. Count up the list of schools (lowest to highest) until reaching the one that, with all the other schools below it, accounts for 20% of the state's total student enrollment. Whatever the percentage of students at or above *proficient* in that school is—whether 17%, 23%, 32%, 47%—that's Maryland's baseline.

Attendance and Graduation Rates

Elementary and middle schools must also make AYP in attendance rate,[1] and high schools must make AYP in graduation rate.[2] The State Board of Education has set the 2013–14 attendance-rate goal at 94% and the graduation-rate goal at 90%.

Setting the AYP Baseline

MSDE used 2002–03 data to set baselines for reading and math performance and 2001–02 data to set baselines for attendance and graduation rates.[3] These baselines serve as starting points toward the state's 2013–14 goals.[4] Federal regulations require that states set their reading and math baselines using the higher of the two values shown in Figure 1. In Maryland, Box #1 yielded the higher value and was, therefore, used to calculate AYP.

The 2002–03 baseline for reading was set at 43.4%, meaning 43.4% of students in the aggregate and in each subgroup must be proficient or better in reading. The 2002–03 baseline for math was set at 33.9%.

Setting Annual Measurable Objectives

Next, the state must map out yearly targets toward its 2013–14 goals with annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for reading, math, attendance, and graduation. The state has already set reading and math AMOs for the 2003–04 school year: reading, 45.9%; math, 36.9%.

Generally, every school and school system will be held to the same AMOs, but the objectives will be adjusted slightly to reflect each school's grade-level enrollment and structure (e.g., K–5, 6–8, K–8, K–12).

Schools with grade structures that do not include tested grades will still be accountable for student performance. For example, the performance of third-

Continued on page 2

Inside the Classroom

Holding schools accountable for performance at the school level, rather than the grade level, decreases the number of cells for which schools are responsible, thereby increasing their chances of making AYP.

To make AYP, the answer must be "met" in each cell.

Table 1

Making Adequate Yearly Progress					
	Reading performance & participation on MSA & IMAP/Alt-MSA		**Mathematics** performance & participation on MSA & IMAP/Alt-MSA		**Attendance and/or Graduation**[5]
	Was the AMO met?	Was 95% participation met?	Was the AMO met?	Was 95% participation met?	Was the AMO met?
All Students					
American Indian/ Alaskan Native					Subgroup performance in attendance/ graduation rate is not a factor in determining AYP.
Asian/Pacific Islander					
African American					
White					
Hispanic					
FARM					
LEP					
Special Education					

Adequate Yearly Progress

Continued from page 1

graders coming from K–2 schools will count for the third-graders' current school and for the K–2 school previously attended.

Checking for AYP

To make AYP, schools, school systems, and the state must meet the AMO in reading and math for students in the aggregate and for each subgroup of students. Schools must meet the AMO in attendance or graduation rate; school systems and the state must meet the AMO in both. Finally, schools, school systems, and the state must have at least 95% of their students participate in testing (see Table 1).

However, if the minimum group size (N) is not met in a particular cell, then it is not checked for AYP, and the school automatically makes AYP in that cell. Maryland uses minimum group size to protect schools from the absences or poor performance of a few students in very small subgroups. (Absent students who fail to make up the test are assigned the *basic*, or lowest, proficiency level.)

For reading and math performance, N = 5 students. For test participation, N = 30 students for schools with one grade tested, 60 for schools with two or more grades tested, and 60 for local school systems.

Subgroup Performance with Confidence Intervals

Figure 2

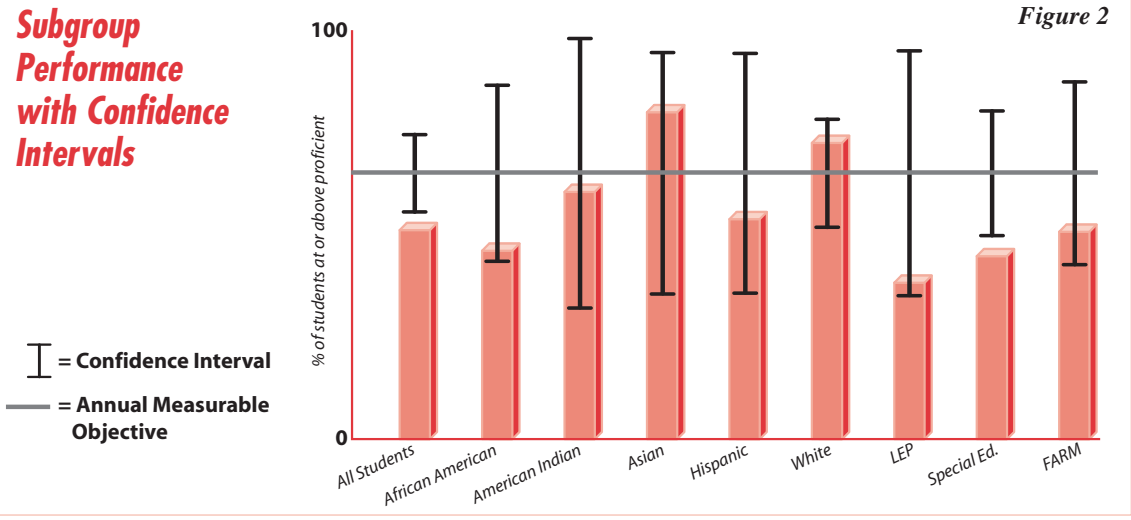

Table 2

Adequate Yearly Progress: Maryland's 2003 Status						
	Percent proficient		**Participation rate**			
	Reading	**Math**	**Reading**	**Math**	**Attendance**	**Graduation**
All Students	met	met	met	met	met	met
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	met	met	met	met		
Asian/Pacific Islander	met	met	met	met		
African American	met	met	met	met		
White	met	met	met	met		
Hispanic	met	met	met	met		
FARM	not met	not met	met	met		
LEP	not met	met	met	met		
Special Education	not met	not met	met	met		

Because students receiving free and reduced-price meals and students in special education failed to meet the AMOs in reading (43.4%) and math (33.9%) and because students with limited proficiency in English failed to meet the AMO in reading, the state did not make AYP for the 2002–03 school year. Table 2 shows where the state did and did not meet its AMOs. Figures 3 and 4 (page 3) show a subgroup breakdown of the state's reading and math scores.

One Score/One Subject

Grade-level scores for the MSA will be reported for each subject. But to determine whether AYP has been met, grade-level scores will be combined to create one subject score for the school. For example, in a K–5 school, reading scores for third- and fifth-graders will be combined to yield one reading score for the school. This score will be weighted according to the number of students in each grade.

Grade-level scores cannot be produced for the geometry MSA,[6] which is an end-of-course exam. Therefore, the state will determine whether AYP has been made by checking the percentage of students taking the geometry exam and the percentage proficient on it by the end of grade 12. (As students may start taking the geometry exam as early as sixth grade, and taking the exam became a graduation requirement in 2001–02, the state will finish phasing in this "grade 12 status" approach in 2007–08, when 2001–02's sixth-graders are in the twelfth grade.)

Safe Harbor

A provision called Safe Harbor allows a school not meeting the AMO for each student subgroup to still make AYP. A school is eligible for Safe Harbor if: 1) the school meets all participation requirements; 2) the school meets the reading and math AMOs in the aggregate; 3) each subgroup meets the AMO in attendance or graduation rate; and 4) the percentage of students performing below proficient in any subgroup not meeting the reading or math AMO decreases by 10%.

Confidence Intervals

Confidence intervals protect schools from the small margin of error inherent in every measurement system by widening the target around each year's AMO. The size of the confidence interval varies according to the size of the group. (The smaller the group, the larger the interval. The larger the group, the smaller the interval.) As long as the school performs within the confidence interval, it is considered to have met the AMO.

Figure 2 is an example of a school's reading scores with confidence intervals shown. In this

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Figure 3

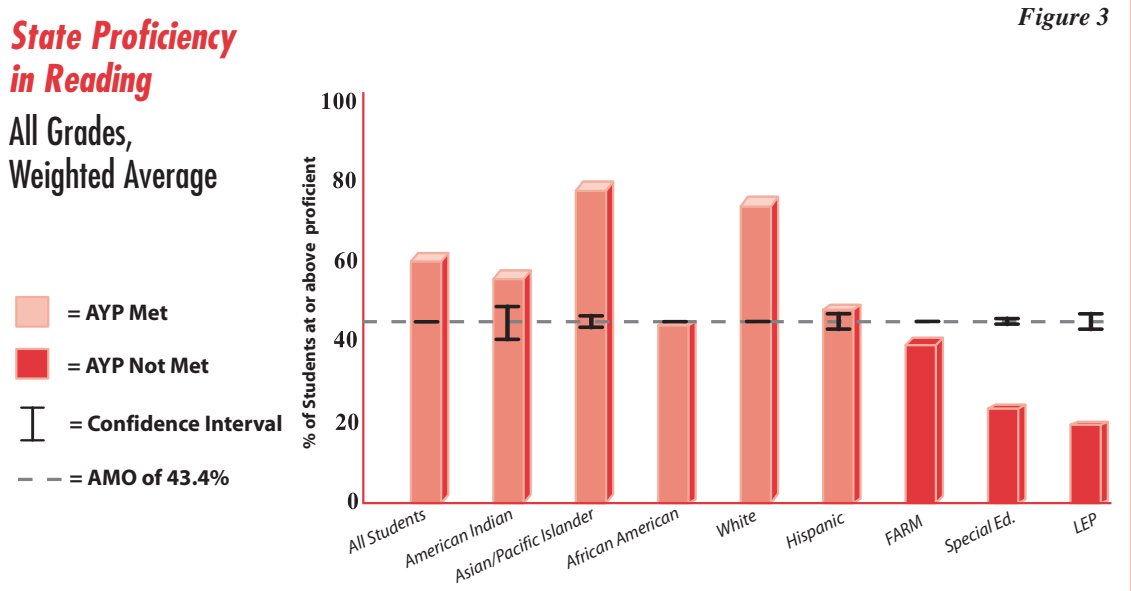
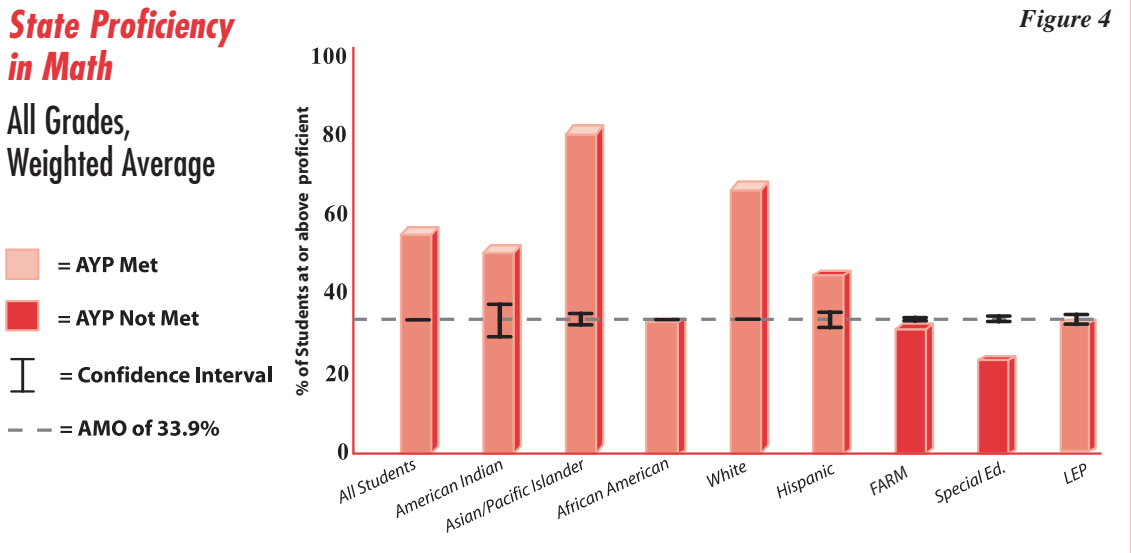


Figure 4



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school, American Indians are the smallest subgroup of students and, therefore, have the largest confidence interval. The confidence interval for All Students is the smallest because it's the largest group. This school did not make AYP. While the AMO was met in most subgroups (with the help of the confidence interval), it was not met for the Special Education subgroup or for All Students.

Questions about how the state's accountability program will affect your school may be directed to your principal or to your school system's Local Accountability Coordinator. ■

[1] *the percentage of students present in school for at least half the average school day during the school year*

[2] *the percentage of students receiving a diploma four years after entering grade 9*

[3] *Baselines for reading performance, math performance, and attendance were set separately for each grade tested.*

[4] *2013–14 reading and math proficiency goal: 100%; 2013–14 attendance goal: 94%; 2013–14 graduation goal: 90%*

[5] *Elementary and middle schools must meet the AMO in attendance rate; high schools must meet the AMO in graduation rate; school systems and the state must meet the AMO in both.*

[6] *The geometry MSA, used to measure high-school math performance, was previously an HSA. As an end-of-course exam, it will continue to be administered in January and May.*

Setting Standards for the MSA, HSA & IMAP/Alt-MSA

Before the state can hold schools accountable for student proficiency, of course, proficiency has to be defined. Setting proficiency standards for the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), Independence Mastery Assessment Program/Alternate MSA (IMAP/Alt-MSA), and High School Assessments (HSA) began in July. Standard-setting for the MSA and IMAP/Alt-MSA involved determining proficient and advanced performance on the tests. Standard-setting for the HSA involved determining passing performance on each. (For more on the HSA, see "HSA Update," page 7.)

The Process

School systems nominated teachers, principals, and school system staff with subject-matter and grade-level expertise to serve on 13 standard-setting groups, alongside representatives of various education organizations (e.g., Maryland PTA, MSTA). The reading MSA required four groups—one apiece for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. The math MSA required four more. The HSA accounted for another four—one each for English I, algebra/data analysis, biology, and government. (The geometry HSA is now considered the high-school math MSA.) Finally, one group was charged with setting standards for the IMAP/Alt-MSA.

Round 1

Standard-setting required several rounds of discussion and voting to establish two cut scores for the MSA and two for the IMAP/Alt-MSA (one between *basic* and *proficient* and one between *proficient* and *advanced*) and one cut score for the HSA (between *pass* and *not pass*).

During the first round, the 13 groups broke into smaller groups and took the test. Given an ordered-item booklet—a booklet in which test items are arranged from those that most students answer correctly to those that fewer and fewer students do—each member put a bookmark on the test item he or she considered the dividing line between basic and proficient performance. (That is, if students can answer that item correctly, as well as all those that came before it, they are proficient in the subject.) Each member placed another bookmark on the test item he or she thought divided proficient and advanced performance[1] (see Figure 1). Each item correlates to a scale score, so that by choosing an item, the members actually chose a cut score. Members discussed their selected scores and established the median (see Figure 2).

Round 2

Members voted again for a cut score, again reviewed their votes, and established a new median. They also examined impact data, which is the percentage of students (disaggregated by race/ethnicity and special services received and reported by state) that will make the *proficient* and *advanced* cuts (or *pass/not pass* cut) given the selected scores.

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Figure 1

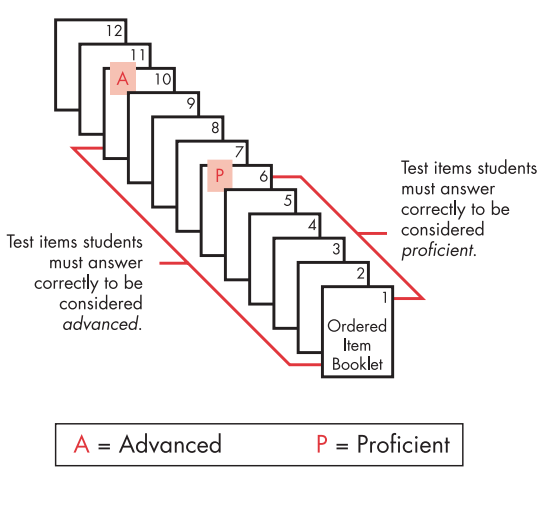
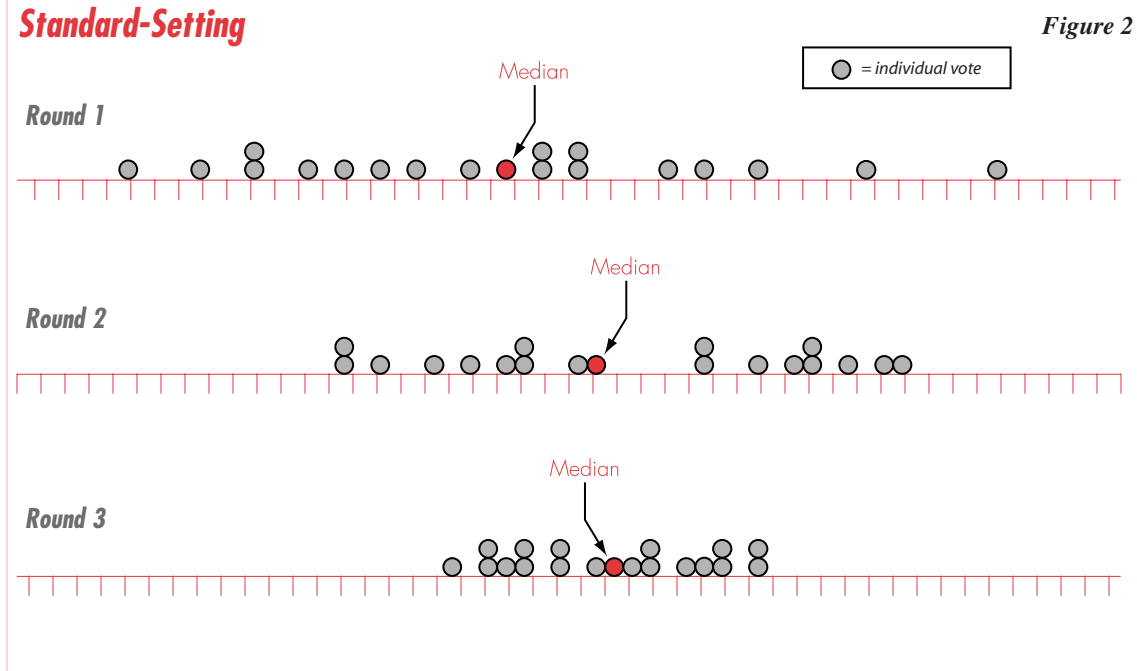


Figure 2



Cut Scores and Resulting Student Performance

Reading MSA

Table 1

Grade	% of students at Basic	Proficient cut score	% of students at Proficient	Advanced cut score	% of students at Advanced	% of students at or above Proficient
Grade 3	41.9%	404	49.5%	488	8.6%	58.1%
Grade 5	34.4%	405	39.7%	455	26.0%	65.7%
Grade 8	40.1%	419	34.3%	463	25.6%	59.9%
Grade 10	38.7%	374	31.5%	415	29.9%	61.4%

Math MSA

Table 2

Grade	% of students at Basic	Proficient cut score	% of students at Proficient	Advanced cut score	% of students at Advanced	% of students at or above Proficient
Grade 3	34.9%	379	50.2%	441	14.8%	65.0%
Grade 5	45.0%	392	45.5%	453	9.5%	55.0%
Grade 8	60.4%	407	26.4%	444	13.3%	39.7%
Geometry	56.6%	411	33.2%	447	10.2%	43.4%

What the Standard-Setters Have to Say

I wanted to know the process to see whether I could support the standards once they're set. It's a good process; I believe in it. Everyone here has high standards for student learning, and they want to see that continue.

–June Clark, MSA, Reading
Instructional Facilitator, Harford County Public Schools

I feel privileged to have been part of the process. It's made me realize how much time, research, and manpower goes in before a number comes out—and how valued teachers are in the process.

–Jilian Whaley, HSA, Algebra/Data Analysis
Stephen Decatur High School, Worcester County

I learned a lot about testing, how standards are set, and item reliability. I think I got more information here than in any statistics class. I'm really impressed with [the test vendor's] professionalism, knowledge base, and willingness to help us understand what we needed to do. You can trust the process; it's something you can really count on.

–Judi Gordon, MSA, Grade 3 Reading
Instructional Specialist, Charles County Public Schools

The teachers and students who are directly affected by the tests make the final decisions. [State officials] want the decisions to be made by the teachers. They're the ones who have experience with the students.

It opened my eyes to how teachers think. They look at items and say, "A student may not understand this problem because ... " And I can say, "As a student, I didn't understand this because ... "

–Dexter Bond, HSA, Biology
Senior, Charles Flowers High School, Prince George's County

Taking the test was a good refresher—it helped us put ourselves in the student's position.

–Amy Miller, MSA, Grade 3 Reading
Teacher, Dogwood Elementary, Baltimore County

IMAP/Alt-MSA Cut Scores

Table 3

Starting Point	Proficient cut score		Advanced cut score	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
11	1	1	2	3
10	2	1	3	3
9	2	1	4	4
8	2	2	4	5
7	2	2	5	5
6	2	2	5	5
5	3	3	6	5
4	3	3	7	5
3	3	3	8	5
2	3	3	8	6
1	5	3	8	5
0	5	3	9	5

Reading IMAP/Alt-MSA

Table 4

Grade	% of students at Basic	% of students at Proficient	% of students at Advanced	% of students at or above Proficient
Grade 3	47.3%	31.4%	21.3%	52.7%
Grade 5	45.7%	28.3%	26.0%	54.3%
Grade 8	52.7%	26.6%	20.7%	47.3%
Grade 11	56.6%	25.0%	18.4%	43.4%

Math IMAP/Alt-MSA

Table 5

Grade	% of students at Basic	% of students at Proficient	% of students at Advanced	% of students at or above Proficient
Grade 3	43.0%	30.0%	27.0%	57.0%
Grade 5	39.7%	29.7%	30.6%	60.3%
Grade 8	46.8%	29.7%	23.5%	53.2%
Grade 11	50.5%	28.7%	20.8%	49.5%

The State's New Improvement Process

In 1994, Maryland enacted two improvement processes for poorly performing schools. All schools not meeting standards and not progressing toward them were eligible for reconstitution (a multi-step program of school system and—in some instances—state intervention). All Title I schools with a negative change index (see Figure 1) on their SPI for two consecutive years were identified for school improvement (a multi-year program of increasingly strict sanctions for continued poor performance).

To comply with No Child Left Behind, Maryland collapsed the two improvement programs into one governing all schools—one that holds schools accountable for progress toward a standard, not progress against themselves. While the new program's progression of intervention resembles the old Title I system, AYP replaces SPI as the measure determining improvement-process eligibility.

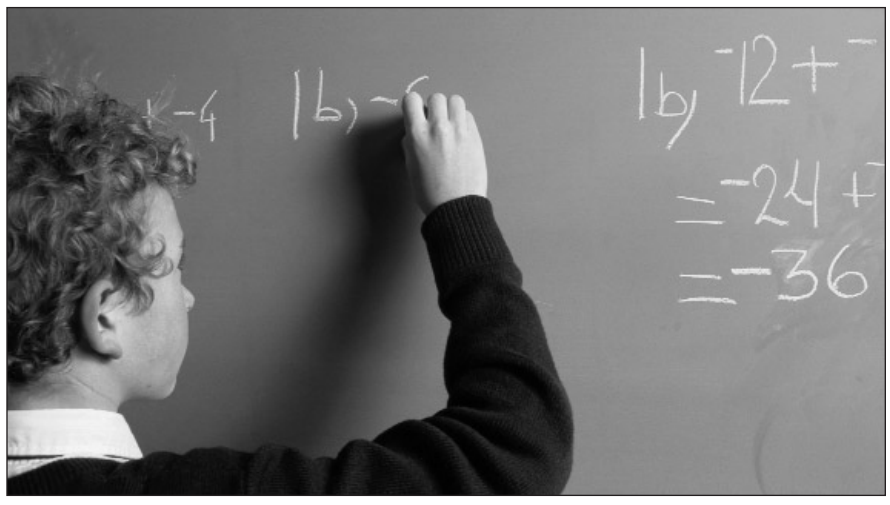


Figure 1

Current Year's SPI - Previous Year's SPI + Year Before Last's SPI / 2 = *SPI Change Index*

Entering Improvement

Any school that fails to make AYP for two consecutive years enters School Improvement, the first phase of the state's improvement process.

School Improvement

Once identified for improvement, schools must draft two-year plans designed to raise the performance of each student subgroup (students of each race/ethnicity and those receiving special services). Title I schools must offer public-school choice (see "The Transfer Option," page 7).

Schools not making AYP during their first year in School Improvement remain in it a second year, and they must continue implementing their school improvement plans. Title I schools must continue school choice and begin offering supplemental educational services (e.g., tutoring, academic intervention) to students in poverty.[1]

Schools not making AYP during their second year in School Improvement move into Corrective Action.

Corrective Action

School systems direct all changes to schools in Corrective Action. These changes could include replacing school staff, adopting a new curriculum, decreasing school-level management authority, and extending the school day or year. Title I schools must continue to offer school choice and supplemental services.

Schools not making AYP while in Corrective Action move into Restructuring.

Restructuring

Restructuring involves at least one of the following:

- Replacing all or most school staff related to the school's failure to make AYP.
- Contracting with a management company to operate the school.
- Reopening the school as a public charter school.
- Other restructuring actions involving significant changes to staffing and governance.

Schools have one school year to implement the restructuring plan. If a school is identified for restructuring in 2003–04, for instance, the restructuring plan must be implemented beginning with the 2004–05 school year.

Exiting School Improvement

The first year a school in the improvement program makes AYP, it enters a holding pattern; it doesn't advance to the next step in the process, but neither does it exit the program. During this holding-pattern year, the school must continue offering the services or implementing the changes mandated before it made AYP. If a school makes AYP the following year (a second consecutive year), it exits the improvement program.

If, after exiting, a school fails to make AYP for two consecutive years, it reenters the improvement program at the beginning—i.e., School Improvement, Year 1 (see Figure 2).

Transitioning into Improvement

The Clean Slate

Any school not identified for reconstitution or Title I improvement when No Child Left Behind went into effect (January 8, 2002) has a "clean slate." If a clean-slate school fails to meet the 2002–03 AYP baseline, it is considered to have not made AYP. If the same school fails to make AYP in 2003–04, it will enter School Improvement.

The Reconstituted School

Schools under local reconstitution for one or two years as of January 8, 2002, are considered to have been in School Improvement for the corresponding number of years during the 2002–03 school year. Therefore, if these schools fail to meet the 2002–03 baseline, they have not made AYP and advance to the next step in the improvement process. That is, a school under local reconstitution for one year as of January 8, 2002, that fails to make the 2002–03 baseline enters the second year of School Improvement. A school under local reconstitution for two years as of January 8, 2002, that fails to make the 2002–03 baseline enters Corrective Action.

Schools under local reconstitution for three or more years as of January 8, 2002, are considered to have been in Corrective Action during the 2002–03 school year. Any of these schools failing to meet the 2002–03 baseline is identified for Restructuring.

As of September 10, 30 non-Title I schools under the old reconstitution program have transitioned into the state's new improvement process. Four schools are in School Improvement, Year 2; seven are in Corrective Action; and nineteen are in Restructuring.[2]

The Title I School

Title I schools under School Improvement or Corrective Action as of January 8, 2002, remained there during the 2002–03 school year. The Title I improvement process was "frozen" in 2002–03, meaning no schools were newly named for improvement and no schools already in the improvement program advanced to the next level of intervention. These schools did have to

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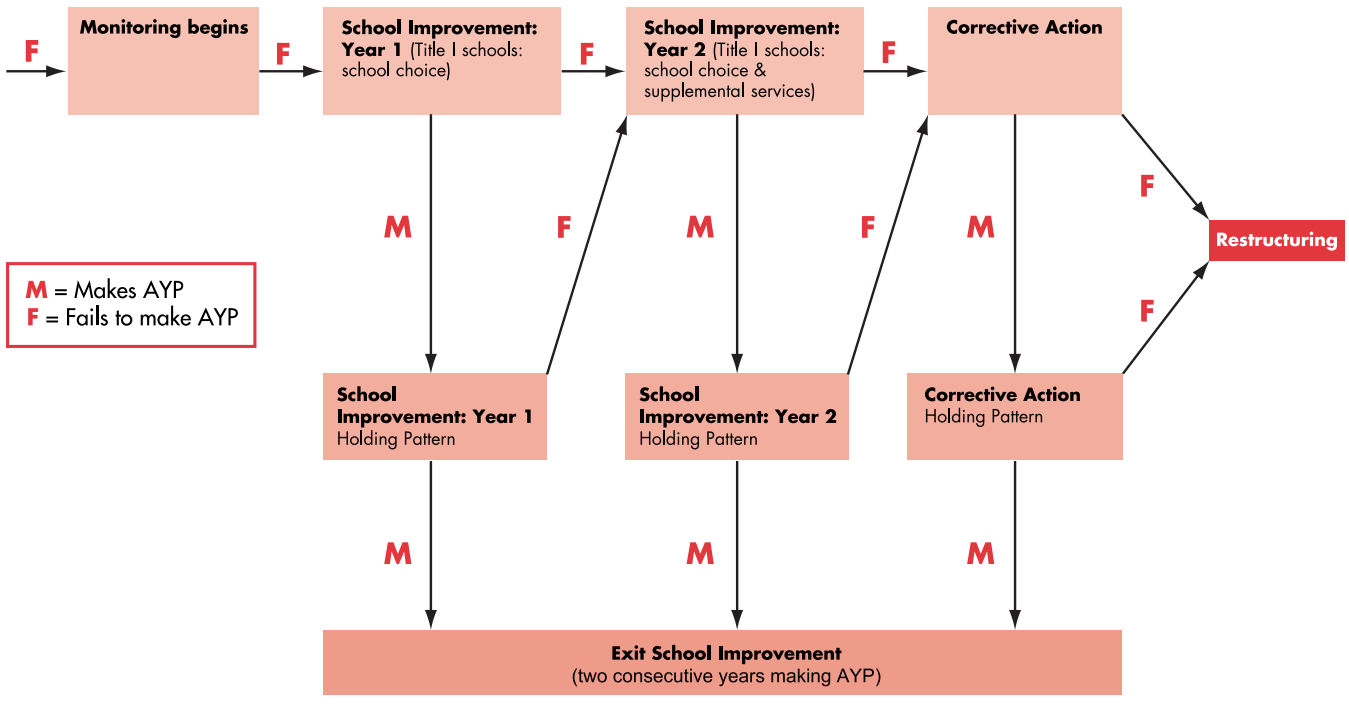
School Improvement: Entering and Exiting

Figure 2



The Maryland School Assessment Home Report

By October 15, school systems (or schools) must send home to parents their child's scores on the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). Below is one of these home reports—the grade 5 math MSA—with simulated data. MSDE will supplement the reports with information about the tests and how to interpret scores.

Visit http://mdk12.org/mspp/index.html for tips on helping parents understand the scores and for answers to frequently asked and difficult questions. A separate section will provide parents background information on the MSA and suggestions for talking to teachers about their child's performance. ■

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Achievement Matters Most

STUDENT'S NAME

Maryland School Assessment
2003 Math: Grade 5

Home Report

Simulated Data

School System Name and #
School Name and #

About the MSA Home Report

In March 2003, your child took the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for mathematics. This test is required by federal legislation and is one measure of your child's mathematics achievement. This mathematics test measures your child's performance against the Maryland Mathematics Content Standards. Maryland's Content Standards describe what all students should know and be able to do. They are available from your school or online at http://mdk12.org.

The Scale Score Chart below shows the mathematics score received by your child, as well as the average mathematics score received by the students in your child's grade in the school, the school system, and the entire state. Scale scores help you to understand your child's performance relative to established standards for basic, proficient, and advanced performance. Short descriptions of the performance expected for each level are shown below. The percentage of students in your child's grade who are achieving at each level is shown below for your school, your school district, and the entire state.

Understanding your child's performance is best done in consultation with your child's teacher and school. Additional information on school performance is available from the following web site: http://mdreportcard.org.

MSA Scale Score Chart

	Scale Score	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Your Child	422			
Your School	434			
Your System	453			
Maryland	393			

0 392 453 800

MSA Performance Level Descriptions

Advanced: Students at this level can regularly solve complex problems in mathematics and demonstrate superior ability to reason mathematically.

Proficient: Students at this level demonstrate an understanding of fundamental grade-level skills and concepts and can generally solve entry-level problems in mathematics.

Basic: Students at this level demonstrate only partial mastery of the skills and concepts defined in the Maryland Mathematics Content Standards.

MSA School/System/State

Percent of students at:	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Your School	10%	75%	15%
Your System	20%	65%	15%
Maryland	45%	46%	10%

TerraNova Norm-referenced Test (NRT) Score

As part of the Maryland School Assessment, your child also took the TerraNova norm-referenced test (NRT). This test measures a different but related body of knowledge from that of the Maryland Content Standards. The percentile information below compares your child's performance with the scores of students in the same grade across the nation. For example, a student who scores in the 40th percentile performed as well as or better than 40 percent of all students nationally—but not as well as 60 percent of those students.

NRT Score
Mathematics: 53

Publication Date: 08/20/03

CTB McGraw-Hill

AUGUST

MSDE posts 2003 state, school system, and school MSA data: **www.mdreportcard.org**

SEPTEMBER

MSDE posts tips for talking to parents about the MSA Home Report: **mdk12.org/mspp/index.html**

MSDE re-releases 2002 state, school system, and school HSA data based on passing scores adopted by the State Board of Education: **www.mdreportcard.org**

NOVEMBER

MSDE posts 2003 state, school system, and school HSA data: **www.mdreportcard.org**

CONTINUALLY

MSDE posts information about its new accountability program: **www.marylandpublicschools.org**

HSA Update

While MSDE was preparing for the inaugural administration of the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and for the first release of its results, the Department was also making some big decisions regarding the High School Assessments (HSA).[1]

MSA/HSA Overlap

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires reading, math, and science testing in elementary, middle, and high school. High-school tests must cover material of at least tenth-grade rigor. To meet the federal testing requirements, high-school reading is tested with the grade 10 MSA in reading. (The English I HSA doesn't meet the NCLB mandate because it's a ninth-grade test.) High-school math is tested with the MSA in geometry (formerly an HSA), and high-school science is tested with the HSA in biology.[2]

Passing the HSA

While *taking* the HSA is now a graduation requirement, *passing* them is not—yet. All students (including middle-school students enrolled in high-school-level courses) must take the HSA after they take the related courses (English I, algebra/data analysis, biology, and government).

In August, the State Board of Education again delayed the earliest possible year that MSDE can require students to pass the HSA.[3] Now the first class that could have its diploma tied to HSA performance is the class of 2009 (students entering grade 9 in fall 2005). The Board voted for the one-year delay because student performance on subtests comprising each HSA will first be reported following the January 2004 HSA administration. The Board believes subtest data will help school systems identify more accurately students' strengths and weaknesses and, in turn, remedy deficits in schools' instructional programs.

In December, the Board will decide whether to publish a regulation that makes passing the HSA a graduation requirement (for the class of 2009 and beyond). A final Board vote on the regulation, if published, would be held in April 2004, following a four-month public-comment period. Delaying this vote until December (from September) allows the Board to consider 2003 HSA results[4] before making a decision.

Setting Standards

Maryland educators recommended passing scores for the HSA—one passing score apiece for the four tests—in July (see "Setting Standards," page 3). However, the State Board of Education didn't vote on the recommended scores until late August, after examining impact data (what percentage of students would have passed the tests) based on the 2002 HSA results (see Table 1).

To encourage improvement in HSA performance over time, the standard-setting group also recommended higher passing scores that could apply to the class of 2011 and the class of 2014. However, the Board has not yet approved HSA passing scores beyond 2005–06.

Reporting Results

Beginning with the 2003–04 school year, HSA results will be reported on students' transcripts as scale scores.[5] (Scores were previously reported on transcripts as percentile ranks.) Also on students' transcripts will be the passing scale score for each test (see Figure 1).

HSA Passing Scores
Class of 2009

Table 1

High School Assessment	passing score	percent passing*
Algebra/Data Analysis	412	52%
English I	407	45%
Government	394	57%
Biology	400	55%

**percent of students who would have passed each HSA in 2002, given the passing score in column 2*

In September, with cut scores set, MSDE re-posted on www.mdreportcard.org the 2002 HSA results in terms of the percentage of students passing. Results are reported for schools, school systems, and the state and disaggregated by race/ethnicity and special services received (free and reduced-price meals, limited English proficient, special education).

In November, the 2003 HSA results will be released to schools and posted on www.mdreportcard.org. Later that month, students' score reports will be sent to parents.

Phasing out the Maryland Functional Tests

In August, the State Board voted to discontinue the Maryland Functional Tests to allow schools to focus instruction on the High School Assessments. Under the phase-out schedule, the functional tests will be administered this year only to twelfth-graders who have not yet passed the tests. The class of 2004 will be the last class to have to take and pass the functional tests to graduate. ■

Figure 1

Maryland High School Assessment	Content	Student Scale Score	School Mean Scale Score	LEA Mean Scale Score	Passing Scale Score
Doe, John	Algebra/Data Analysis	xxx	xxx	xxx	412
LEA* Student ID: 0123456	English 1	xxx	xxx	xxx	407
Test Date: 05/03	Government	xxx	xxx	xxx	394
School: Any School	Biology	xxx	xxx	xxx	400
LEA: Any LEA	Geometry	Taken	—	—	—

**LEA = Local Education Agency*

[1] *The HSA are based on knowledge and skills covered in Maryland's content standards (previously called Core Learning Goals).*

[2] *NCLB's science requirement goes into effect during the 2007–08 school year.*

[3] *The HSA schedule had last been adjusted in April 2003, when the Board voted to delay until 2008 the earliest year passing the tests could be a graduation requirement.*

[4] *scheduled for release on November 1, 2003*

[5] *For the 2003–04 school year, only students in grade 11 and below will have HSA results printed on their transcripts. Next year, all students will have HSA results printed on their transcripts.*

The State's New Improvement Process

Continued from page 5

continue offering the services and implementing the changes already mandated. (Despite the freeze, MSDE was able to exit one Title I school from the improvement program based on its 2002–03 SPI.) Any Title I school identified for improvement (or being monitored for entry into improvement based on one year's SPI) that fails to meet the 2002–03 baseline advances to the next step in the improvement program.

As of September 10, 101 schools under the old Title I school improvement program have transitioned into the state's new improvement process. Nineteen schools are in School Improvement, Year 1; 25 are in School Improvement, Year 2; 12 are in Corrective Action; and 45 are in Restructuring.[2]

Transitioning out of Improvement

In August, 13 schools (11 Title I and 2 non-Title I/reconstitution) exited the improvement process by posting a positive 2002–03 SPI change index and meeting the 2003–04 AYP baseline.

School System Improvement and Corrective Action

School systems not making AYP for two consecutive years will be identified for School System Improvement, at which time they must revise their master plans (required by the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act) and notify parents of their improvement status.

School systems not making AYP for two consecutive years after being identified for School System Improvement advance to Corrective Action, requiring the state to do at least one of the following:

- Defer, reduce, or redirect state funds.
- Order school systems to adopt a new curriculum aligned with the voluntary state curriculum.
- Order school systems to replace school principals and executive officers relevant to the failure to make AYP.
- Remove schools from local school board control.
- Order a reorganization that clusters specified schools under an executive officer approved by the state.
- Appoint a receiver or trustee to manage the school system in place of the superintendent or local board.
- Abolish or restructure the school system (requires legislative authorization).

School systems may also be identified for Corrective Action during the 2003–04 school year if, as of January 8, 2002, 25% or more of their schools were under local or state reconstitution for more than three years. Accordingly, the State Board has placed Baltimore City Public Schools in Corrective Action.

The Transfer Option

Under No Child Left Behind, students in Title I schools identified for improvement must be given public school choice.[3] School systems must offer parents at least two schools not identified for improvement for potential transfer and must pay the associated transportation expenses. In fact, school systems must reserve an amount equal to 20% of their Title I funds for transportation and supplemental educational services. Transferring students bring with them to their new school only their state per-pupil expenditure, not their federal Title I funds or services; however, transferred students must be provided the same opportunities and services as all other students.

Students who take advantage of the choice option may stay in their new school through the end of their grade span (e.g., a first-grader may stay in the new school through fifth grade; a sixth-grader may stay in the new school through eighth grade) even if the school from which he or she transferred exits the improvement program. However, the school system is required to provide transportation only as long as the student's home school remains in the improvement program.

Title I schools were notified of their improvement status in mid-August so they could begin notifying parents and preparing for mandated services. ■

[1] *Applying what's required of Title I schools in School Improvement—school choice (with system-funded transportation) and supplemental educational services—to non-Title I schools would be tantamount to an unfunded mandate. Because corrective action and restructuring don't necessarily require additional funds, they can be required of non-Title I schools.*

[2] *As of September 10, the school-improvement calculation does not include attendance rate. More schools could be identified for improvement if it's found they did not meet the attendance-rate AMO. The calculation also does not include graduation rate and geometry MSA results. High schools may be identified for improvement if it's found they did not make AYP based on these results.*

[3] *School choice was mandated under the first reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1994); however, capacity was an allowable excuse, meaning transfers were disallowed if schools indicated they couldn't accommodate transferred students. Furthermore, transportation expenses weren't covered by the school system. Consequently, few parents were able to take advantage of the school-choice option.*

MSA & HSA: A 2003 Timeline

July

State Board sets proficient and advanced cut scores for MSA and IMAP/Alt-MSA.

August

Names of schools and school systems transitioning into Improvement, Corrective Action, and Restructuring are released.

School systems notify parents of school/school system status.

MSA results are posted on www.mdreportcard.org.

Students' MSA scores are sent to school systems.

September

State Board sets 2005–06 HSA passing scores; delays until 2009 the first year that passing the HSA could be a graduation requirement; votes to phase out Maryland Functional Tests.

2002 HSA data is republished on www.mdreportcard.org based on newly set HSA passing scores.

October

School systems/schools send students' MSA score reports to parents.

November

School systems/schools send MSA, attendance-rate, and graduation-rate data to parents.

2003 HSA data is released to school systems and posted on www.mdreportcard.org.

School systems/schools send students' 2003 HSA score reports to parents.

December

State Board decides whether to publish regulations making passing the HSA a graduation requirement.[1]

[1]*If the State Board publishes the regulation, proponents and opponents of the measure will be able to respond during a four-month public-comment period that follows. A final Board vote, then, would be scheduled for April 2004.*

Setting Standards

Continued from page 3

Round 3

During Round 3, the small groups converged into the original 13. Members voted and discussed yet again, before logging a final vote (a total of four votes for each member). The groups sent their final median cut scores for proficient and advanced performance (MSA and IMAP/Alt-MSA) and for passing performance (HSA) to a Psychometric Council.

Psychometric Council

The Psychometric Council reviewed the work of all 13 groups, made sure that quality controls were followed, ensured the standard-setting process was technically sound, and forwarded the recommendations and comments to the Review & Articulation Committee.

Review & Articulation Committee

The Review & Articulation Committee reviewed the work of all 13 groups and the Psychometric Council, ensured that rigor was equivalent across grades and subjects, reviewed the articulation among grades and subjects, and forwarded the recommendations to Dr. Grasmick.

State Superintendent

Dr. Grasmick reviewed the work of the 13 groups, the Psychometric Council, and the Review & Articulation Committee and made a final recommendation to the State Board of Education.

State Board of Education

The State Board set MSA and IMAP/Alt-MSA cut scores during its July meeting and set HSA passing scores during its August meeting. See Tables 1–5 (page 4) for the MSA and IMAP/Alt-MSA cut scores approved by the Board and for state results. ■

[1]*Proficient and Advanced bookmarking applies to the MSA and IMAP/Alt-MSA only; for the HSA, members book-marked only one item—that which divides passing and non-passing performance.*

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